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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 13395 101205Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SS-15 PA-01 NSC-05
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4327
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13395

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON KHMER REFUGEES ENTERING
UNHCR CAMP

REF: (A) BANGKOK 12982; (B) STATE 113197

1. EMBASSY OFFICERS MET MAY 10 WITH LT. COL. KAMON
PRACHUABMO, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE INERIOR MINISTRY'S
DISPLACED PERSONS CENTER. THEY ASKED KAMON ABOUT THE
STATEMENT IN THE APRIL 30 NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE BY
HENRY KAMM THAT UP TO 8000 KHMER REFUGEES WOULD BE
ENTERING THE UNHCR REFUGEE CAMP AT KHLONG YAI IN
TRAT PROVINCE. KAMON SAID THAT THE NUMBERS INVOLVED
ARE FAR FEWER, AND THAT HE THINKS "ONLY SEVERAL HUNDRED"
REFUGEES WILL BE AFFECTED. THEY WILL BE KHMER WHO
HAVE NO RELATIVES IN THAILAND OR OTHER AFFINITY WITH THAILAND.
KAMON SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE TO ALLOW SUCH
REFUGEES TO WORK IN THAILAND, AND THAT THEREFORE
THE REFUGEES HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ENTER THE
CAMP. THE MAJORITY AMONG THE ALLEGED 8000 WOULD PRE-
SUMABLY REMAIN OUTSIDE THE CAMP.

2. EMBASSY OFFICERS TOLD KAMON THAT THESE NEW ARRIVALS
IN THE CAMP WOULD BE LIKELY TO HAVE MINIMAL PROSPECTS
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FOR U.S. RESETTLEMENT.

3. IN ANSWER TO AN EMBASSY QUERY, ACTING UNHCR REPRESENTA-
TIVE EVERTS SAID MAY 10 THAT THE UNHCR IS IN NO POSITION
TO OBJECT TO REFUGEES BEING PUT INTO A CAMP BUT WILL
PROBABLY REFUSE TO INCREASE THE FOOD BUDGET FOR THE CAMP
TO PAY FEEDING COSTS FOR THESE NEW ARRIVALS. THE RESULT

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WILL BE THAT AN INCREASING CAMP POPULATION WILL HAVE TO SUBSIST ON RATIONS INTENDED FOR FEWER REFUGEES. EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, THE UNHCR WOULD FEEL COMPELLED TO AUGMENT THE FOOD BUDGET WHEN PER CAPITA FOOD RATIONS FALL BELOW AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL.

4. EMBASSY OFFICERS INDICATED TO EVERTS THAT THE US WOULD SUPPORT ANY UNHCR DEMARCHE TO THE RTG ON THIS SUBJECT SINCE WE VIEW WITH CONCERN A SITUATION IN WHICH PREVIOUSLY SELF-SUFFICIENT PERSONS ARE FORCED TO ASSUME REFUGEE STATUS. EVERTS INDICATED HE WOULD ACCOMPANY MAJ. GEN. SISAK THAMMARAK, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF INTERIOR, TO TRAT NEXT WEEK. HE PLANS TO RAISE THE ISSUE THEN, RATHER THAN WRITE A LETTER AT THIS TIME.

5. HENRY KAMM INFORMED US MAY 9 THAT THE TIMES HAD DISTORTED HIS COPY. HE HAD REPORTED THAT THE NUMBER OF KHMER REFUGEES IN THAI CAMPS, NOT IN KHLONG YAI ALONE, MIGHT INCREASE FROM 15,000 TO 23,000.
WHITEHOUSE

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